



January 1, 2019

Paradise Police Department  
5595 Black Olive Dr  
Paradise, CA 95969

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BY: \_\_\_\_\_

Re: Request for Public Records on Police Use of Force Investigations, Sustained Findings of Police Dishonesty and Sexual Assault

To Whom It May Concern:

I write to respectfully request records related to the investigation and discipline of peace officers employed by the Paradise Police Department (the "Department") under the California Public Records Act, Gov't Code §§ 6250 et seq., California Penal Code §§832.7-832.8, and Art. I, § 3(b) of the California Constitution, as set forth below.

Last fall, the California legislature passed, and Governor Brown enacted, SB 1421 (Skinner), which amends California Penal Code section 832.7 to provide the public a right of access to records related to investigations into investigations and discipline of peace officers for shootings and serious uses of force, as well as sustained findings of dishonesty related to the investigation, reporting, and prosecution of a crime or police misconduct. We now respectfully request the records newly available under SB 1421. We make this request as the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California, as requestor, on behalf of the ACLU of California (including the ACLU of Northern California, ACLU of Southern California, and ACLU of San Diego and Imperial Counties) as well as a wide array of civil rights, government transparency, and criminal defense groups, including the Youth Justice Coalition, Justice Teams Network, Anti Police-Terror Project, California Faculty Association, PolicyLink, STOP Coalition, California Public Defender Association, and National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers.

We have coordinated this request, and will share all records obtained, with this group of organizations, and further commit to making those records available to the public by posting on the Internet and other means, to help facilitate access to the records you produce.

#### **I. Requests for Records**

We understand that this change in the law may result in a significant number of responsive documents, and that you may have received a number of requests for similar documents from other requestors. We have endeavored to tailor our request to a limited selection of the most important documents and most relevant timeframe for incidents.

As set forth below, for purposes Requests 1 through 7, we do not seek all records relating to the underlying incident, but only a limited set of "Decisional Documents" relating to the

administrative investigation of the incident. For purposes of these requests, “Decisional Documents” means all documents<sup>65</sup> reflecting or setting forth:

- The Department’s decision, prior to any administrative appeal, that an officer’s conduct did (or did not) violate the law or agency policy, and any reasons for that decision;
- The final investigative report (prior to any administrative appeal) of the Department, or any division of the Department, or any document setting out factual findings of, or recommended factual findings for, the person or body charged with deciding whether the officer’s conduct was within policy and/or warranted discipline or other corrective action;
- The punishment imposed or corrective action taken as the result of an administrative investigation, including letters of intent to impose discipline or other documents reflecting discipline imposed, changes in rank or assignment, training required, or changes to or examinations of Department policy, training or practice;
- A decision on appeal from the Department’s factual finding, or the discipline or corrective action imposed, including review by a superior or arbitration, including any statement of reasoning by an appeal body and any revised discipline or corrective action imposed, or any documents reflecting modifications of discipline due to the *Skelly* or grievance process,
- Any agreement to resolve an administrative investigation, including any agreement (or lack of agreement) as to the facts of what happened in the incident, or discipline or corrective action to be imposed;
- The final investigative report, factual findings, legal conclusions, or recommendations on discipline, policy, procedures or training, by the district attorney, independent civilian oversight body, or outside law enforcement agency brought on to conduct an investigation into an incident;
- The final imposition of discipline or implementation of corrective action.

For purposes of this request, records include, but are not limited to all investigative reports; photographic, audio, and video evidence; transcripts or recordings of interviews; autopsy reports; all materials compiled and presented for review to the district attorney or to any person or body charged with determining whether to file criminal charges against an officer in connection with an incident, or whether the officer’s action was consistent with law and agency policy for purposes of discipline or administrative action, or what discipline to impose or corrective action to take; documents setting forth findings or recommended findings; and copies of disciplinary records relating to the incident, including any letters of intent to impose discipline, any documents reflecting modifications of discipline due to the *Skelly* or grievance process, and letters indicating final imposition of discipline or other documentation reflecting implementation of corrective action. Cal. Penal Code §832.7(b)(2).

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<sup>65</sup> The term “records” as used in this request is defined as “any writing containing information relating to the conduct of the public’s business prepared, owned, used, or retained by any state or local agency regardless of physical form or characteristics.” Cal. Govt. Code § 6252, subsection (e). “Writing” is defined as “any handwriting, typewriting, printing, photostating, photographing, photocopying, transmitting by electronic mail or facsimile, and every other means of recording upon any tangible thing any form of communication or representation, including letters, words, pictures, sounds, or symbols, or combinations thereof, and any record thereby created, regardless of the manner in which the record has been stored.” Cal. Govt. Code § 6252 (g).

For purposes of these requests, “Decisional Documents” does not include underlying evidence, expert reports, witness statements, audio or video, unless incorporated by or included in the documents described above.

We also recognize that at some departments, older records may be stored in different recordkeeping systems that may require more time an effort to retrieve. If this is the case with your agency, we are happy to discuss particular obstacles or concerns and a process for retrieving records as efficiently as possible.

**Records Request No. 1:** All DECISIONAL DOCUMENTS related to the administrative investigation of any use of force by a peace officer employed by the Department<sup>66</sup> that resulted in death, from January 1, 1999 to the present. *See* Penal Code § 832.7(b)(1)(A)(ii).

**Records Request No. 2:** All DECISIONAL DOCUMENTS relating to any incident in which a peace officer employed by the Department was found to have committed an act of dishonesty directly relating to the reporting, investigation, or prosecution of a crime, or directly relating to the reporting of, or investigation of misconduct by, another peace officer or custodial officer, including, but not limited to, any sustained finding of perjury, false statements, filing false reports, destruction, falsifying, or concealing of evidence, at any time from Jan. 1, 1999, to the present. *See* Penal Code § 832.7(b)(1)(C). Such incidents may also include receipt or solicitation of bribes, loans, favors, or gifts in relation to an investigation; misappropriation of property in an investigation, obstructing an investigation, or influencing a witness.

**Records Request No. 3:** For any officer about whom a sustained finding of dishonesty is disclosed in response to Records Request No. 2, above, all DECISIONAL DOCUMENTS relating to any sustained finding of dishonesty relating to the reporting, investigation, or prosecution of a crime or misconduct by another peace officer, regardless of date.

**Records Request No. 4:** All DECISIONAL DOCUMENTS related to any administrative investigation into the discharge of a firearm at a person by a peace officer employed by the Department, which did not result in death, from January 1, 2014 to the present. *See* Penal Code § 832.7(b)(1)(A)(i).

**Records Request No. 5:** All DECISIONAL DOCUMENTS related to any administrative investigation into a use of force by a peace officer employed by the Department against a person that resulted great bodily injury, from January 1, 2009 to the present. *See* Penal Code § 832.7(b)(1)(A)(ii).

**Records Request No. 6:** For any officer who used force resulting in death at any time since January 1, 1999, all DECISIONAL DOCUMENTS related to any administrative investigation into the discharge of a firearm at a person by that officer that did not result in death, or a use of

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<sup>66</sup> A peace officer is “employed by the Department” for purposes of these requests if that officer has been employed by the Department at any time. The modifying phrase “employed by the Department” does *not* limit the requests only to officers currently employed by the Department, nor does it exclude documents within the position of the Department that concern the incidents that occurred while the peace officer was employed by another agency.

force by that officer against a person that resulted great bodily injury but not death, regardless of date.

**Records Request No. 7:** All DECISIONAL DOCUMENTS relating to any incident in which a sustained finding was made by any law enforcement agency or oversight agency that a peace officer or custodial officer employed by the Department engaged in sexual assault involving a member of the public, from January 1, 2009 to the present. *See* Penal Code § 832.7(b)(1)(B). For purposes of this request, “sexual assault” refers to the commission or attempted initiation of a sexual act with a member of the public by means of force, threat coercion, extortion, offer of leniency or other official favor, or under the color of authority, including unwanted or gratuitous sexual contact such as touching or groping. *See id.* § 832.7(b)(1)(B)(ii).

**Records Request No. 8:** For any officer about whom a sustained finding of sexual assault is disclosed in response to Records Request No. 7, above, all DECISIONAL DOCUMENTS relating to any sustained finding of sexual assault, regardless of date.

## II. Request for Preservation, or in the Alternative, Request for Documents

While we have asked for a limited selection of documents that are newly available pursuant to S.B. 1421, review of those documents will very likely reveal some incidents in which requestors or other members of the public would like additional detail, such as records of investigation, audio, video, expert reports and other documents excluded from the present request. We therefore request that you provide assurances that you will preserve all such documents, at least for a reasonable time after complying with the present set of document requests, to allow targeted requests for additional information on specific cases.

## III. Prioritization of Requests

We understand that this change in the law may result in a significant number of responsive documents, and that you may have received a number of requests for similar documents from other requestors. To help make sure your response serves the public interest in disclosure of these important records as efficiently as possible, we ask that you prioritize in the following order:

First, *please prioritize requests from other requestors who are family members of those killed by police seeking information on how their loved ones died.* We recognize that the change in law in many instances may allow these family members access to this information for the first time, and for the first time provide answers about their losses, and urge you prioritize these disclosures.

Second, for our requests, prioritize in the order of requests, 1 through 8.

Third, if for any reason some categories of documents responsive to a request are more readily disclosable and others more difficult — for example, if older records are in archival storage or stored in a different and harder-to-use system, or documents responsive to one request are not as easily categorized for disclosure and would require more time-intensive searching than another — please contact us to discuss the obstacles to prompt disclosure so that we can work out a

timeline, process, or refined selection criteria for documents that are more difficult to find or produce.

Please respond to this request in ten days, either by providing the requested information or providing a written response setting forth the specific legal authority on which you rely in failing to disclose each requested record, or by specifying a date in the near future to respond to the request. See Cal. Gov't Code § 6255. Pursuant to section 6253, please disclose all reasonably segregable non-exempt information from any portions of records you claim are exempt from disclosure.

If any records requested above are available in electronic format, please provide them in an electronic format, as provided in Govt. Code § 6253.9. To assist with the prompt release of responsive material, we ask that you make records available to us as you locate them, rather than waiting until all responsive records have been collected and copied.

If you would like to discuss these requests, please feel free to call Hermelinda Calderon or Casey Kasher at (213) 977-5265. Otherwise, please send any correspondence or documents in electronic format via email to [prarequest@aclusocal.org](mailto:prarequest@aclusocal.org), or correspondence or documents on CD-ROM or USB drive to:

SB 1421 Records  
ATTN: Casey Kasher  
ACLU of Southern California  
1313 W. 8th Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Because this request is made on behalf of a number of nonprofit public interest organizations, with the intent to make this material easily accessible to the public as promptly as possible, we request that you waive any fees. *North Cty. Parents Ass'n v. Dep't of Ed.*, 23 Cal. App. 4th 144, 148 (1994); Cal. Gov. Code §6253(e). However, should you be unable to do so, ACLU SoCal will reimburse your agency for the "direct costs" of copying these records plus postage. If you anticipate these costs to exceed \$50.00, please notify us prior to making the copies.

Thank you in advance for providing the records we have requested. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions regarding this letter.

Best,



Peter Bibring  
Director of Police Practices  
ACLU of Southern California